

The USIA also supports such projects as the American People Ambassador Program, a program of people to people international. This program arranges face-to-face professional, scientific, technical, and community exchanges between Americans and their counterparts around the world. Each one explores a different topic, but all share the personal exchange of information, ideas, goals, and experiences with leading public and provide sector citizens of foreign countries.

One such program in my State is the torch of Birmingham Award Program, which seeks to honor Russian companies and those in the Newly Independent States who are succeeding despite difficult economic conditions. In September, over 400 Russian business and government leaders will be coming to Birmingham to participate in this event. They will represent every imaginable segment of the Russian economy, and will network with leading Alabama business, political, and community leaders. The USIA and its resources are essential to organizations like the American People Ambassador Program which operate exchanges around the world.

All of us are keenly aware of the budgetary constraints we face. But we must not be short sighted by eliminating investments in our Nation's future and security. Who can say whether or not educational and cultural exchange programs will be maintained if they are placed in a department with a significantly different mission, set of priorities, and official purpose?

The world remains just as dangerous as it has ever been. New threats have replaced some of those which ended with the cold war. But they are just as real and threatening to international peace and stability. The world looks to us for leadership—leadership with a strong voice. I applaud Senator LIEBERMAN's efforts to ensure that America continues to have that strong voice through an independent USIA, and look forward to working with him on this issue when the State Department reauthorization bill is again brought before the Senate.●

THE INCREASING AND IMPORTANT ROLE OF PRIVATE TRAINING FACILITIES IN WORK FORCE TRAINING

● Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, today I bring to the attention of my colleagues an industry that is growing almost unnoticed in this country, an industry that demonstrates the ability of the private sector to meet the challenges posed by our expanding and technologically advanced economy. I am speaking of the hundreds of private professional firms across the Nation that provide job training to American workers. Since the early 1980's, a new breed of high-quality private sector training providers have proliferated in response to the need of business and industry for highly skilled workers. This

is especially true of providers who train people who train people in the information-technology sector of the American economy.

Each year, American employers wisely spend billions of dollars to train and educate their employees. This training enhances the skills of those workers and often enables them to assume new, more challenging positions. The training market in information technology alone—which is one of the fastest growing and most promising sectors of our economy—totaled \$2 billion in 1994, and almost all of this need was met with private sector resources. Private professional firms have developed extensive programs and nationwide networks to serve the huge and growing needs of large and small businesses in this field. Many of these firms, although often small enterprises, work in partnerships with large employers who demand that they provide only the highest quality training and who require that they teach skills that conform to industry-based benchmarks and standards.

Today, training providers, which include both public education institutions and private training companies, are using skill standards as benchmarks to develop their courses and to prepare professional workers for exams that will certify them as qualified to perform certain high-skill jobs. Skill standards in this context are not rigid definitions of "jobs," but rather a large comprehensive set of well articulated, competency-based skill statements that are industry driven and nationally recognized. By reflecting the true and detailed needs of the workplace, and by being used in the hiring, promotion, and training of the work force, these become de facto standards at the national level, and they transcend national borders as do businesses in today's global economy. In short, private sector training providers in the information-technology field reflect developments in the marketplace and prepare individuals to handle the jobs of the future.

According to Training magazine, U.S. organizations with 100 employees or more spent \$48 billion on training in 1993, and it is likely that the total increased in 1994 and will again in 1995. Employers are recognizing the need to train the individuals they hire in order to keep pace with rapidly evolving technology and to remain competitive in the global economy. Nowhere is training more important than in the information-technology industries, where technological innovations and product upgrades that require new or enhanced skills are coming to market everyday.

Within the information-technology industry it is clear that private sector training providers are one of the main resources to turn to for training. For example, most of the large American software companies use what is known as a leveraged training mode, wherein independent training providers develop

courses that teach individuals how to operate the application or systems of a given software company. In turn, the software company will denote the training provider as one that is authorized to award certification in the operation or maintenance of that company's products. This is just one of many examples of how corporations and smaller businesses are using the resources of private training providers.

Whether individuals are updating their skills to improve performance on the job or are unemployed and seeking new skills, by completing training and receiving an industry recognized credential they are improving their own career prospects as well as keeping the American work force competitive.

These training centers must meet the demands of industry and of the market that will eventually employ their students; therefore they must provide only the highest quality training. And while the information-technology market demands quality, it also demands more and more qualified individuals each year. For example, the software and computing industry grew at an annual rate of over 28 percent between 1980 and 1992, while the GDP for that time averaged 2.4-percent growth. Not only is the number of jobs in this field increasing, but those jobs pay wages that are significantly higher than wages in many other industries. In addition, given that the information-technology companies have no geographic-specific resource requirements, they contribute to the economy of virtually every State in the country.

Mr. President, it is quite apparent that the individuals with high-technology skills are in great demand throughout the Nation, and it is apparent that the demand will only increase. Private training providers have been rising to this challenge, and they have done so with entrepreneurial vigor and a commitment to quality. As the number of people in need of training increases, and as the number of people that organizations intend to train outstrips their capability to train them in house, private sector providers of training services will become an ever more important part of the American economy.

It has been my pleasure today to recognize and share with my colleagues the merits of this growing American industry.●

UNLV'S WOMEN'S SOFTBALL TEAM

● Mr. BRYAN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the achievements of the women's softball team at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas. This outstanding group of women and their coaching staff have set a standard of excellence in 1995 which is worthy of merit.

The team results for the 1995 season are the best in the history of the university. UNLV softball finished their season ranked fourth in the Nation by both a USA Today poll and the NCAA.